

The DfE Review

**The key findings and
recommendations of the DfE Review**



Department
for Education

Summary of findings

There is much about the Department that is positive, but:

- Department is **bigger than it needs to be** – high-quality but inefficient
- We must get better at **prioritising work** with Ministers regularly
- **Decision making** is slow and involves too many people
- **Processes** can be much leaner
- Not enough staff are working on projects with end points which limits our ability to use **flexible resourcing** to respond quickly to new priorities by redeploying staff
- There is too much **duplication** between Agencies, Directorates and corporate services
- The **corporate overhead** is too large – HR, IT, Estates and Finance all cost more than benchmarks from the public and private sectors
- How we manage the expansion of **Academies and Free Schools** without further increasing staff resource has been a key question for the review:
 - The way we work with Academies and Free Schools is sustainable until around one-quarter of schools are converted (expected to be March 2015 on current rate of conversion)
 - There is a policy question about how we work with Academies after that date which we need to start thinking about now



Recommendations

- **No major structural changes but big changes to ways of working**
- **Identify work to stop** in line with Ministerial priorities work ('stop exercise')
- **Continuous prioritisation** with Ministers (termly), which Ministers have committed to
- **Increased flexible resourcing** – from 3% of staff to 30% – with limited standing teams and clearly defined projects with end points, particularly in ESD and CYPFD
- Increasing our **capability and the pace and rigour of our policy making**
- **Culture of continuous improvement**, where decision making roles are clear and staff are empowered to improve processes and ways of working
- **Reducing our corporate services spend** in HR, Finance, IT and Estates
- All underpinned by **a new approach to staffing**



Prioritisation

- The Review considered from a zero base:
 - what work we have to do – for example, because of legislation or Cabinet Office requirements we don't control, and
 - what work we have some form of choice over – e.g. Ministerial requirements or how we as officials have chosen to implement their decisions.
- Scope to stop significant amounts of work where Ministers would prefer to see resource moved to higher priorities, or where we believe that the activities we undertake to implement Ministerial decisions could be done more efficiently.
- One-off stop and re-allocate exercises aren't enough. We must regularly re-prioritise and consider what we can stop doing to re-allocate resource to meet ministerial priorities. Doing this regularly will build Ministers' trust in our assessments of resource need.
- We have agreed with Ministers that each term we will carry out an exercise to identify work that could be stopped, the resource allocated to it and how best to redeploy. We will trial this approach in this year's business planning.



New organisational structure

